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PENCE SAYS IRAQ AND AL JAZEERA WILL BE HELD TO ACCOUNT

Washington, Mar 23, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Mike Pence made the following statement today regarding Al Jazeera's decision to air images of American POW's:

"Holding up POW's for public ridicule is not only deplorable and barbaric, but it is a clear violation of the Geneva Convention and those who choose such despicable actions will be held to account.

"The Qatar-based, Al Jazeera network over the weekend paraded five American POW's, including one woman, in front of TV and showed them not only in a state of great indignity and duress but it also showed the bodies of at least four other soldiers graphically and closely portrayed. Two of them appeared to be shot in the head, raising suspicions they had been executed.

"The Geneva Convention is quite clear: prisoners of war must be humanely treated and protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation or against insults or public curiosity. Measures of reprisal against POW's are prohibited.

"According to Humans Rights Watch, 'The humiliating display of POW's is a war crime.'

"Those who have mistreated American POW's will be held to account. They will be hunted and prosecuted as war criminals.

"However, the Iraqi's aren't the only people guilty in this case. I also want to condemn the Al Jazeera Network.

"The very broadcast of these images to over a billion people is a clear violation of the Geneva Convention.

"I want to quote Lt. General John Abizaid: 'Any state-owned media that shows this material is in violation of the Geneva Convention and will be held to account. These actions are absolutely unacceptable.'

"I want to give a warning to the government of Qatar: Your government-owned media should

think very, very carefully about future decisions which violate the Geneva Convention or the dignity of the men and women who fight for our freedoms.”

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